



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Nursing

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Good afternoon Chairman Arrington, Ranking Member O'Rourke and distinguished Members. Thank you for inviting me to appear before your Subcommittee. My name is Kyle Chapman and I had the honor of serving in the U.S. Marine Corp from December 2000 to December 2004 with 3rd Battalion 5th Marines and 2nd Battalion 4th Marines. Currently I serve as the Texas Tech University Health Science Center (TTUHSC) School of Nursing (SON) Veteran Liaison and work closely with the Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Track. I would like to share a portion of my story about my transition from military life to civilian life and how it has impacted what I do today.

When I exited the Marine Corp and became a civilian I was within a month removed from my second tour of combat in Ramadi, Iraq. In 2005, I began college at South Plains College and did well. I then transferred to Texas Tech University (TTU) the summer of 2005 at which point I was mentally, emotionally, and physically not coping well with my transition. I fell into a depression trying to cope with flashbacks and nightmares or better known as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). I stopped going to class and left TTU with a .62 GPA. In April 2009, through different sorts of intervention from family, friends, and VA mental health counselors I decided to attend the Amarillo VA substance abuse and recovery program. I have been sober since April 2009. I went back to school at South Plains College the fall of 2011 and restarted my college journey. In summer 2013 I was able to transfer back to TTU on academic probation and graduated in August 2015 Cum Laude with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies and minor in Addictive Disorders and Recovery Studies. My intent was to work with military, veterans, and their families in a resource, PTS, and substance abuse manner. Much of my success in college was due to the TTU Military and Veterans Programs (MVP) assistance. In October of 2015, I was hired as the TTUHSC SON Veteran Liaison.

Today I have the distinct honor to serve military and veterans locally, in Texas, nationally, and globally through my position with the purpose of assisting them with their transition to higher education. On a daily basis I work with military and veterans to help them through the application process of the VBSN track which includes the application and admission process. After acceptance, I continue to assist with any issues or concerns that may arise until the day they graduate.



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I believe one of the greatest ways to honor our military and veterans is to recognize and honor the value they bring to our society through their career and educational endeavors. In the Veterans to BSN track we do just that. We do this in several ways but most importantly the VBSN track honors their service by recognizing they have a working and practical knowledge of skills obtained while serving in the military. If they can demonstrate their knowledge to our faculty through testing and practical application (known as a Comprehensive Assessment Placement -CAP) they are exempt from having to take these courses if they so choose. Therefore our veterans are able to graduate more quickly and with less debt. (Please refer to the Veteran to BSN brochure)

The Veteran to BSN Track is a tremendous degree plan that I believe takes into consideration the holistic view of transition from military to higher education. However, there is always room for improvement and challenges to face. One challenge that is not only true for VBSN and TTUHSC students but all institutions that have regional campus and satellite locations is the Post 911 G.I Bill Basic Allowance for Housing or better known as the BAH rate. I am sure you all are familiar with this benefit but as an example currently the BAH rate for Lubbock, TX is \$1,097 per month and San Antonio, TX is \$1,811 per month. Being that Lubbock, TX is where the official TTUHSC institution is physically located our students attending the VBSN track in San Antonio, TX will receive the BAH rate in Lubbock. So, our students in San Antonio are receiving \$714 less per month where the cost of living is significantly higher.

I am thankful this Subcommittee addressed this inequity in the passage of H.R.3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017. Thank you for allowing veterans to receive MHA based on the location where the student attends the majority of their classes. This will help our students at TTUHSC's regional campuses. I understand the Subcommittee's concerns about some schools taking advantage of this provision. As the Subcommittee monitors the implementation of H.R. 3218, I would suggest the Subcommittee consider allowing students to receive MHA at the "site" where students do their clinical training as well where as many students receive their didactic training 100 percent online. Please know, we are thankful for the change made by H.R.3218.

Providing resources for military and veterans to transition into college and into the workplace are very important. As a student at TTU, the MVP was crucial to my success as it is for many military and veterans. Also, degree plans much like the Veterans to BSN are invaluable as they recognize the value of their service and allow them the opportunity to capitalize on their skill set and turn it into a career, which is the goal. I am proud to have served in the U.S. Marine Corp, of my University and to serve our military and veteran students at Texas Tech University Health Science Center. I am honored to have this opportunity to share my story and am glad the subcommittee is devoting its time on this



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important initiative. In closing I would like to quote one of our current VBSN students who was recently recognized for her assistance with Hurricane Harvey relief efforts.

“The situations in the military are uncontrolled field settings,” Grant said. “That training has helped me stay in the correct mindset while I work in more controlled environments. The best part of TTUHSC is that they have acknowledged all of my training in the Army. A lot of places say they are military-friendly, but TTUHSC really backs it up. They stand behind their military students. When they say it, they mean it.”